

Message Text

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ORIGIN AF-08

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DRAFTED BY AF/W:BSKIRKPATRICK:IW
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A/FBO:LALSPAUGH (SUBS)
L/C:FKWIATEK

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R 260342Z FEB 77
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY COTONOU

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 043512

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PDIP, US, DM

SUBJECT: BENIN COUP ATTEMPT - DAMAGE TO USG PROPERTY

REFS: A) STATE 34966, B) COTONOU 359, C) 76 STATE 146742,
D) 76 COTONOU 1014

1. DEPARTMENT'S INITIAL REACTION IS THAT DAMAGE INCURRED BY USG PROPERTY IN COUP ATTEMPT IS NOT SIGNIFICANT ENOUGH TO WARRANT CLAIM AGAINST GPRB. DEPARTMENT NOTES, HOWEVER, GPRB OFFER PARA 3 REFTEL B TO PAY FOR ALL DAMAGES RESULTING FROM COUP ATTEMPT. ASSUME THAT AT SOME POINT GPRB WILL COME FORTH WITH POLICY APPLICABLE TO ALL MISSIONS. PENDING GPRB CLARIFICATION OF REIMBURSEMENT POLICY DEPARTMENT WILL HOLD DECISION ON WHETHER OR NOT CLAIM WOULD BE APPROPRIATE.

2. DEPARTMENT HAS NO OBJECTION TO POST INITIATING REPAIRS ON THE AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE WITH OBLIGATIONS AGAINST RENT OWED TO GPRB. WE AGREE THAT POST SHOULD SEND NOTE TO
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MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS INFORMING THEM OF THIS ACTION. BELIEVE THAT THIS WOULD BE APPROPRIATE TIME FOR POST TO MENTION TO MFA THAT AGREEMENT ON TERMS OF LEASE STILL PENDING AND EMBASSY STILL HOLDING RENT CHECKS. ALTHOUGH GPRB DID NOT MAKE SPECIFIC COMMITMENT CONCERNING TERMS OF LEASE IT DID MAKE COMMITMENT FOR OUR CONTINUED USE OF

CHANCERY AND RESIDENCE UNTIL REPLACEMENTS BUILT.
(REFTEL D).

3. IF ISSUES CITED PARA 6 REF B ARE RAISED BY GPRB
YOU SHOULD BE GUIDED BY FOLLOWING.

A. NEW CONTRACT FOR RESIDENCE. WE BELIEVE NEW LEASE
WITH GPRB FOR RESIDENCE SHOULD AGREE AS CLOSELY AS
POSSIBLE WITH THE TERMS OF THE LEASE WE NEGOTIATED WITH
PREVIOUS OWNER (RENE ZINSOU). WE WOULD HOPE THAT GPRB
NATIONALIZATION OF PROPERTY WOULD NOT NECESSARILY
RESULT IN ANY CHANGE IN THE OBLIGATIONS OF A TENANT
WITH A VALID AND UNEXPIRED LEASE. IF SUBJECT IS
RAISED, YOU SHOULD MAKE NO REPEAT NO COMMITMENTS, BUT
AGREE TO REPORT ANY PROPOSAL TO DEPARTMENT.

B. DURATION OF CONTRACT. OUR UNDERSTANDING IS THAT
GPRB, AS REPORTED REF D, MADE OPEN ENDED COMMITMENT
TO ALLOW US TO CONTINUE TO OCCUPY BOTH THE CHANCERY
AND THE RESIDENCE UNTIL WE HAVE CONSTRUCTED A NEW
CHANCERY AND RESIDENCE. WE ARE NOT WILLING TO CITE
A DATE BY WHICH THE NEW RESIDENCE AND CHANCERY WILL
BE COMPLETED. EXPERIENCE IN OTHER WEST AFRICAN
COUNTRIES DEMONSTRATES THAT EVEN WHEN NECESSARY FUNDS
HAVE BEEN APPROPRIATED, THERE ARE OFTEN PROLONGED
DELAYS IN CONSTRUCTION WHICH MAKE COMMITMENT TO
COMPLETE STRUCTURES BY A CERTAIN DATE IMPOSSIBLE.

C. STEPS TAKEN TO DATE BY USG TO MEET COMMITMENT
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TO BUILD NEW COMPLEX BY 1981. IT IS STILL THE
DEPARTMENT'S INTENTION TO ADHERE TO THE TIME SCHEDULE
SET FORTH IN PARA 3 REF C. HOWEVER, IF SUBJECT ARISES,
YOU MAY NOTE THAT WE HAVE NOT MADE A COMMITMENT TO BUILD
THE NEW COMPLEX BY 1981, BUT ONLY TO INCLUDE PROVISION
FOR A NEW CHANCERY AND RESIDENCE IN THE FISCAL YEARS
1980 AND '81 BUDGET REQUEST. PROVIDED SUITABLE PLOTS OF
LAND ARE MADE AVAILABLE, AND THE DEPARTMENT'S REQUEST
IS APPROVED BY CONGRESS, THE DESIGN PHASE COULD BEGIN
IN THE LAST QUARTER OF 1980. CONSTRUCTION PHASE COULD
PROBABLY BEGIN BY 1981 AND THE PROJECT COULD BE COMPLETED
BY THE END OF 1982. THE DEPARTMENT BUILDING PROGRAM
HAS ALREADY BEEN PRESENTED TO THE CONGRESS FOR FISCAL
YEARS 1978 AND '79. THE 1980-81 BUDGET REQUEST WILL NOT
BE MADE UNTIL FY 1979, AND THUS IT IS NOT POSSIBLE AT
THIS TIME TO CITE "SPECIFIC STEPS" TAKEN BY USG TOWARD
MEETING COMMITMENT TO BUILD NEW COMPLEX IN COTONOU.

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Message Attributes

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